

Chronology

The chronology of Ancient India up to the time of Buddha is at present the focus of fierce scholarly debates. The majority of Indian scholars assume a date of 4000 BCE for the *Ṛgveda*, rejecting also the so-called ‘Aryan invasion theory’, whereas the majority of Western scholars maintain the invasion theory and date the *Ṛgveda* to 1500–1200 BCE. The chronology offered here represents largely the traditional Indian position.

Indians who do not use the Western (Gregorian) calendar have several other systems of dating. The most common eras used in today’s India are *samvat* (beginning 57 BCE) and *saka* (beginning 78 CE).

On the basis of the more recent research, based on archaeology and astronomy, the following chronology can be tentatively established:

c. 4000 BCE	Earliest Vedic hymns
c. 3500 BCE	Early Harappan civilization
c. 3100 BCE	Traditional dates for the ‘Great Flood’ and Manu Vaivasvata
c. 3000–2750 BCE	Traditional date for Yayāti Period
c. 2750–2550 BCE	Traditional date for Māndhātri Period
c. 2700–1500 BCE	Mature Indus civilization
c. 2350–1950 BCE	Traditional date for Rāmacandra period
c. 1900 BCE	Age of <i>Rāmāyana</i>
c. 1500–500 BCE	Major <i>Upaniṣads</i> , development of early <i>Sāṃkhya</i> , early <i>Pūrva Mīmāṃsā</i>
c. 1400 BCE	Great Bhārata War – Age of Kṛṣṇa. Early version of <i>Mahābhārata</i>
c. 1200 BCE	Early <i>Sūtra</i> literature. Consolidation of Vedic civilization: <i>Manusmṛti</i>
624–544 BCE	Life of Gautama Buddha according to traditional reckoning
527 BCE	End of Mahāvīra’s earthly life according to Jain tradition
518 BCE	Persian invasion under Skylax and conquest of the Indian satrapy for Darius I
c. 500 BCE–500 CE	Composition of <i>Śrauta Sūtras</i> , <i>Gr̥hya Sūtras</i> ,

	<i>Dharma Sūtras, Vedāṅgas</i> ; the basis of the orthodox systems; composition of the epics and the original <i>Purāṇas</i>
c. 500–200 BCE	Composition of the <i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
c. 500–200 BCE	Bādarāyaṇa's <i>Vedānta Sūtra</i>
c. 490–458 BCE	Reign of Ajataśatru, king of Magadha
c. 400 BCE	Pāṇini's <i>Aṣṭādhyayī</i> (Grammar)
c. 400–200 BCE	Jaimini's <i>Pūrvamīmāṃsā Sūtra</i>
327–325 BCE	Alexander of Macedonia's invasion of India
c. 322–298 BCE	Reign of Candragupta of Magadha
c. 300 BCE	Megasthenes, Greek Ambassador to Magadha
c. 300 BCE	Kautiliya's <i>Ārthaśāstra</i> (according to some scholars: 100 CE) Gautama's <i>Nyāya Sūtra</i> and Kaṇaḍa's <i>Vaiśeṣika Sūtra</i>
c. 273–237 BCE	Reign of Aśoka
c. 200 BCE–100 CE	Invasions of Śuṅgas, Iranians, Śakas and Kuśānas, who founded kingdoms in India
c. 200 BCE–200 CE	Peak period of Buddhist and Jain influence
c. 150 BCE–100 CE	Patañjali's <i>Mahābhāṣya</i>
c. 115 BCE	Besnagar inscription of Heliodorus with a mention of Kṛṣṇa worship
c. 100 BCE–500 CE	Patañjali's <i>Yoga Sūtra</i>
c. 100 BCE–100 CE	Upavarśa's commentary on <i>Pūrvamīmāṃsā Sūtra</i> and <i>Vedānta Sūtra</i>
c. 100 BCE–400 CE	Śabara- <i>bhāṣya</i> on Jaimini Sūtras
c. 100 BCE–800 CE	Composition of <i>Tirukkural</i>
c. 100 BCE	Early Mathurā sculpture; images of gods in temples
c. 25 BCE	Indian embassy to Emperor Augustus of Rome
c. 50 CE	First documentation of images of gods with several pairs of arms
c. 10	Indian embassy to Emperor Trajan of Rome
c. 100–500	Expansion of Hinduism in South-East Asia
c. 100–200	<i>Yājñavalkyasmṛti</i>
c. 100–300	<i>Viṣṇudharma Sūtra</i>
c. 100–400	<i>Nārada-smṛti</i>
c. 200–500	Composition of <i>Viṣṇu Purāṇa</i>
c. 250–325	<i>Sāṅkhya Kārikā</i> of Īśvarakṛṣṇa
c. 300–600	Composition of some of the older <i>Purāṇas</i> in their present form
c. 300–888	Pallava rulers in South India (Kāñcīpuram)
c. 319–415	Gupta empire of Mathurā
c. 400–500	Vatsyayana's <i>Kāma Sūtra</i>
c. 400	Composition of <i>Harivaṃśa Purāṇa</i> , <i>Abirbudhnya Samhitā</i> . Age of Kalidāsa, the greatest Indian dramatist. Spread of Vaiṣṇavism, especially Kṛṣṇa cult. Beginning of Tantricism
c. 400–500	Vyāsa's <i>Yoga-bhāṣya</i>

c. 450–500	Huna invasions
c. 500	<i>Devī-māhātmya</i> (in <i>Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa</i>). Spread of Śāktism into larger areas
c. 500–800	Composition of <i>Kūrma Purāṇa</i>
547	Kosmas Indikopleustes travels to India
c. 600–650	Poet Bana, author of <i>Kadāmbarī</i> and <i>Harsacarita</i>
c. 600–800	Peak of Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavism
c. 600–900	Late (metrical) <i>smṛtis</i> ; composition of <i>Agni Purāṇa</i> and <i>Garuḍa Purāṇa</i>
after 600	Strong development of Vedānta
c. 600–800	Brahmanical renaissance; successful fight against strongly tantric Buddhism
c. 640	King Harṣa of Kanauj sends embassy to China
c. 650–1200	Several independent kingdoms in western, central, eastern and southern India
c. 650–700	Life of Kumārilabhaṭṭa and Māṇikkavācakar
since c. 700	Prevalence of <i>bhakti</i> religions
	Flourishing of Kaśmīr Śaivism
c. 700–750	Gauḍapada, author of a <i>kārikā</i> on the <i>Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad</i> and Paramaguru of Śāṅkarācārya
c. 788–820	Life of Śāṅkarācārya [according to some: c. 700]
c. 800–900	Composition of the <i>Bhāgavata Purāṇa</i> in its present form; <i>Śukra-nīti-sāra</i>
c. 800–1250	Cola dynasty in Tamiḷnāḍu
c. 825–900	Medathiti, writer of a commentary on <i>Manu-smṛti</i>
c. 900	Udāyana's <i>Nyāyakusumañjalī</i>
c. 900–1100	<i>Śiva Purāṇa</i> ; Saivite Tantricism in Indonesia
	Composition of <i>Yogavasiṣṭharāmāyaṇa</i> and <i>Bhaktisūtra</i>
999–1026	Mahmud of Ghazni repeatedly raids India
1025–1137	Life of Rāmānuja
1026	Muslims loot temple of Somnāth
c. 1100	Buddhism virtually extinct in India. Life of Abhinavagupta. Composition of Hindu Tantra
c. 1100–1400	Composition of <i>Śākta Upaniṣads</i> ; rise of Vīraśaivism in South India
c. 1150–1160	Composition of Kalhana's <i>Rājatarāṅginī</i> , recording the history of Kaśmīr
c. 1150	<i>Śrīkaṇṭha-bhāṣya</i> . Building of Jagannāth Temple at Puri
c. 1197–1276	Life of Madhvācārya
1211–1236	Reign of Iltutmish, first sultan of Delhi; beginning of Muslim rule over large parts of India
c. 1216–1327	Rule of Pāndyas at Madurai; foundation of the famous Minākṣi and Śiva Temple of Madurai
c. 1250	Beginning of <i>Śaiva-siddhānta</i> . Building of Sun Temple in Konāraka

c. 1275–1675	Jñāneśvara of Mahārāṣṭra and other <i>bhakti</i> mystics
1288	Marco Polo at Kalyan
c. 1300–1386	Life of Sāyaṇa, famous commentator on the Vedic <i>Samhitās</i> and <i>Brāhmaṇas</i>
1327	Muslims loot temple at Śrīraṅgam
c. 1333	Ibn Battuta's travels in India
1336–1565	Kingdom of Vijayanāgara, last Hindu empire in India, extending as far as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines
c. 1340	Life of Mādhava, author of <i>Sarvadarśanaśaṅgraha</i> and <i>Pañcadaśī</i>
c. 1350–1610	Viraśaivism as the state religion of Mysore
c. 1350–1650	Composition of many works of the Pūrvamīmāṃsakas
c. 1360	Life of Vedāntadeśika
c. 1400–1470	Life of Rāmānanda
c. 1420	Life of Mīrābāī
1440–1518	Life of Kabīr
c. 1449–1568	Life of Śaṅkaradeva, great Vaiṣṇava preacher in Assam
c. 1469	Birth of Gurū Nanak, founder of Sikhism
c. 1475–1531	Life of Vallabha
c. 1485–1533	Life of Caitanya
1498	Vasco da Gama, after having rounded the Cape of Good Hope, lands on the Malabar coast
c. 1500	Composition of <i>Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa</i> and of Sādānanda's <i>Vedānta-sāra</i>
c. 1500–1800	Peak of Durgā worship in Bengal
c. 1500–1600	Life of Sūrdās of Agra
c. 1550	Life of Brahmānanda Giri, author of a famous commentary on Śaṅkara's <i>Śārīraka-bhāṣya</i>
1510	Portuguese occupy Goa
c. 1526–1757	Moghul rule in India, destruction of most Hindu temples in North and Central India
c. 1532–1623	Life of Tulāsidāsa
c. 1542	The Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier lands in Goa
c. 1548–1598	Life of Ekanātha
1580	Akbar the Great invites some Jesuit missionaries from Goa to his court for religious discussions
c. 1585	Life of Harivamṣa, founder of the Rādhā-Vallabhis
1608–1649	Life of Tukarāma
1608–1681	Life of Rāmdās
1610–1640	Composition of Mitrāmīśra's <i>Vīramitrodaya</i> , famous digests of the <i>dharma-śāstras</i>
c. 1630	Composition of Śrīnivāsadāsa's <i>Yatīndramatadīpikā</i>
1631	Death of Mumtaz, in whose honour Shah Jahan built the famous Taj Mahal or Agra

1651	The (British) East India Company opens first factory on the Hugli (Bengal)
1657	Dara Shikoh translates the Upaniṣads into Persian
1661	Bombay becomes a British possession
1664	Śivajī declares himself king of Mahārāṣṭra
c. 1670–1750	Life of Nagojibhaṭṭa, author of numerous works on grammar, <i>dharma-śāstra</i> , yoga etc.
1675	Foundation of the French colony of Pondichéry
1690	Foundation of Calcutta through East India Company (Fort St. George)
c. 1700–1800	Life of Baladeva, author of <i>Govinda-bhāṣya</i>
c. 1750	Composition of the (reformist) <i>Mahānirvāṇa-tantra</i>
1757	Battle of Plassey; Clive is master of India
1784	Asiatick Society founded in Calcutta by Sir William Jones
1818	Defeat of the last Maratha Peshwa
1828	Rām Mohan Roy founds Brahma Samāj
1829	Law against <i>satī</i>
1829–1837	Suppression of the <i>thags</i>
1834–1886	Life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa
1835	Introduction of English school system in India
1842–1901	Life of M.D. Ranade, great social reformer
1857	The so-called ‘Mutiny’ (‘First Indian War of Independence’ in more recent history books)
1858	The British Crown takes over the administration of India from the East India Company
1875	Foundation of <i>Ārya Samāj</i> by Swami Dāyānanda Sarasvatī
1885	Foundation of <i>Indian National Congress</i> in Bombay
1909	Foundation of Hindū Mahāsabhā by Pandit Mohan Malaviya
1913	Nobel prize in literature for Rabindranath Tagore
1920	Mahatma Gandhi begins first All-India Civil Disobedience Movement
1925	Foundation of <i>Rāṣṭrīya Svayamsevak Sangh</i>
1947	Partition of India and creation of the Indian Union and Pakistan as independent nations
1948	Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi Foundation of <i>Rām Rājya Pariṣad</i> Pandit Nehru elected prime minister of the Indian Union; Sri Cakravarti Rajagopalacari appointed governor general
1950	India declared a republic within the Commonwealth; acceptance of the constitution. Death of Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Ramana Maharṣi
1951	Inauguration of the <i>Bhūdān</i> movement by Vinoba Bhave. Foundation of the <i>Bhāratīya Jana Sangh</i>

1955	The Hindu Marriage Act passed in parliament
1956	Reorganization of states (provinces) according to linguistic principles
1961	Portuguese colonies in India (Goa, Damao and Diu) liberated in a military action
1962	Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first president of the Republic of India (since 1950), dies; Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, vice-president, succeeds him
1964	Death of Jawaharlal Nehru; Lal Bahadur Sastri succeeds him as prime minister. Foundation of Viśva Hindū Pariṣad (VHP)
1965	Conflict with Pakistan (West). Indira Gandhi succeeds Sastri as Prime Minister
1984	Sikh agitation for an independent Khalistan; Central government forcefully evicts Sikh extremists from Golden Temple in Amritsar/Punjab; Indira Gandhi assassinated by two of her Sikh guards
1985	Rajiv Gandhi, Indira's eldest son, elected prime minister
1991	Rajiv Gandhi assassinated by Tamil extremist.
1992	Hindu agitation on behalf of temple on Rāma's presumed birthplace in Ayodhyā culminates in destruction of Babri-Masjid and major rioting in many Indian cities
1998	Electoral victory of Hindu parties: establishment of a Bharatiya Janata Party minority government Celebration of Kumbhamela at Hardwar with millions of pilgrims attending